

```

*****
* From:THE DRUIDS PROGRESS, Report #7. The DRUIDS PROGRESS is      *
* published seminannually (Gods Willing) and is sent primarily to  *
* the subscribing members of ADF. For Further information write:    *
* ADF, PO Box 9420, Newark, DE, USA 19714      (include a SASE).    *
* All Items accredited to "the Archdruid" have been written by and  *
* are (C) 1990 by P.E.I. Bonewits. All items created by other      *
* parties are (C) 1990 by them. All opinions expressed, save those *
* specifically attributed to the Board of Trustees, are the opnions *
* of the individuals expressing them and are Not official ADF      *
* policy.                                                            *
* Reprint Procedure: Neopagan, Druidic, Midievalist and all        *
* cultural publications may reprint any material written by P.E.I.  *
* Bonewits, but his copyright notice must appear in full. If more  *
* than 250 words are excerpeted, one cent per word should be donated *
* to ADF.                                                            *
*****

```

THE ENEMIES OF OUR ENEMIES

By Adr. Isaac Bonewits (C) 1990

In DP #6 I discussed the phenomenon of fundamentalist Christians starting religious freedom groups, suggesting that it would be unwise for Neopagans to assist them. Elsewhere in this issue I'd like to lift up the fundamentalist rock and see what's crawling around underneath it.

I've been inspired to write this essay by the astonishing news that a civil liberties coalition of Neopagan and othe roccult groups in St. Louis, Missouri, - The Alliance for Magical and Earth Religions, or "AMER" - has Michael Aquino's Temple of Set (an ultra-right wing offshoot of Anton LaVey's Church of Satan) as an active member and his wife Lillith Aquino as one of their directors! Surely, I said to myself, they've got to be kidding...

Like most Neopagans, I believe that toleration in general is A Good Thing, Unlike some, however, I also think it can be foolishm when exercised too much towards those who would like to destroy us. For example, when I go to a Pagan festival, I don't mind Budhists, Agnostics or liberal monotheists showing up to check us out. Yet I feel violated when fundamentalists arrive with intent to spy upon us, to convert us, or to interfere with our activities. I have much the same reaction when I see Satanists at our festivals or in "Our" bookstores trying to recruit new members.

Some Satanists will claim that, like Neopagans, they are an oppressed religion, that they are misunderstood, that they are the victims of the

Christian press. They will quote the old saying, "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," and argue that we should become their allies. All of which makes sense only if you are ignorant about both Satanism and Neopaganism.

As I have written elsewhere, there are several kinds of Satanist: One type is the Liberal Heterodox or punk Satanist. These are the anarchist sorts, generally young, who stress the revolutionary or Luciferian side of the Satan myth. They are essentially rebelling against subservience to the Christian God, the sickness of Christian morality, and their parents. A sizable proportion of them might have become Neopagans if they had heard of us first, and some of them convert later on. As far as I can tell, they seem to grow out of being Satanists when they finish adolescence.

Another type of Satanist is the Conservative Orthodox or Fascist sort, generally older, uneducated, and unsuccessful (the basic KKK or American Nazi Party recruit), though their leaders can be quite clever and successful. These are the right wing Satanists who like to stress the might-makes-right, dictatorial side of the Satan image. Major denominations would include the Church of Satan and the Temple of Set, both of whom are careful to distinguish themselves from the other types.

A third kind of Satanist is the "Sincere sociopath" (Paul Suliin's term), or crazy kind. These folks are obsessed with the deathm torture, rape, and madness parts of the Satan archetype. Usually from extremely dysfunctional families, these people have grown up being told that they are evil, so they try to fulfill everyone's expectations. They tend to commit various horrible crimes in Satan's name, and sometimes belong to one of the other sorts of Satanism as well. Right wing Satanic leaders, when speaking for the public record, always deny that the sincere sociopaths are "real" Satanists, much as other Christians disown criminal behavior by people calling themselves Christian.

Another category of Satanists (who seem to be mostly imaginary), is the supposed global conspiracy of child molesting, kidnapping, human sacrificing, cannibalistic, multigenerational criminals who haunt the dreams of fundamentalist Christians and Gerlado Rivera. The primary evidence for this conspiracy comes from people who believe themselves to be "ritual abuse survivors" and from Christian preachers who claim to be ex-leaders in the conspiracy. Of course, the accusations of incestuous orgies, human sacrifice, and cannibalism have been laid against many minority religions over the centuries, including the early Roman Christians themselves, Jews, "witches",

and various heretical groups. These claims serve mostly to whip up public hysteria against the chosen target groups, in this case modern Satanists, who can be easily and deliberately equated with Neopagans and New Agers.

Some of the survivors do appear to have been through some kind of horrible experiences that their minds have chosen to interpret as Satanic Rituals, just as others with similar stories have interpreted their experiences as encounters with UFO's. Unfortunately, hard evidence, in the form of actual bodies or the names of real people who could be arrested and charged with crimes, just doesn't exist. I suspect that the survivors were actually molested and tortured by their own parents or local religious leaders, and their memories became distorted by their childhood ideas about evil, in order to explain their suffering to themselves. One telling example of how this process can work is that of an Orthodox Jewish abuse survivor, who believes she was tortured by people in Nazi uniforms (in the U.S. in the 1960's). She had no mental equation that "evil people = Satanists," so she insterted the images of what she did have : "Evil people = Nazis." On the other hand, the sorts of crimes reported are well within the might-makes-right morality that many Satanists promote, and I have no doubt that more than a few Satanists have taken advantage of their "moral freedom" to commit atrocities, even against their own children. I just don't believe that these psychos constitute an organized conspiracy.

As for the professional "ex-Satanic High Priests," they seem to be short on evidence of their claims too. Oddly enough, although some of these preachers have confessed to multiple felonies on nationwide television, none has ever been arrested, nor have any of them gone to local police and confessed their crimes. Subsequently, none has ever served prison time for deeds that would normally put them away for the rest of their lives. Apparently, if you claim to have reformed yourself and become a good Christian, you no longer need to pay your debt to society, no matter how terrible the crimes you've admitted. Any of you attending public lectures by such "ex-Satanists" might want to bring this up with local law enforcement officers and, if possible under local laws, make citizen's arrests - I for one would love to see such liars forced to testify under oath in a court of law.

This brings us to the last, and by the largest, category of Satanists: the fundamentalist Christians themselves, who spend all their time inflating the image of Satan, feeding psychic energy into the archetype, and publishing detailed descriptions of the sorts of evil acts that devil worshippers are supposed to engage in - descriptions that other sorts of Satanists are only too eager to imitate.

We Neopagans are constantly having to explain to the general public that Satan is a figure in Christian Mythology, that our deities are far older and more powerful, and that you have to be a Christian or a Moslem in order to worship the Devil because nobody else believes in him. We know full well that the fundamentalists are actively working to blur the distinctions between Satanism and Paganism in the public mind, and we should know that having a cozy relationship with Satanists is going to play right into the Christian smear campaign.

So why are we tolerant of obnoxious, unethical, or nasty behavior when the people involved are calling themselves Satanists, when we wouldn't cut fundamentalist Christians engaging in the same kind of behavior so much slack? Granted, Satanism is a part of the occult community, since it's the "occult" or hidden side of fundamentalism, and advocates the practice of various sorts of ceremonial magic. As we know, the occult/magical/metaphysical community comprises a wide variety of organizations and individuals - good, bad, ugly, and just plain weird. We don't have to be friendly to all of them, nor accept them as equals or allies. Neopagans have enough trouble with interacting with those Meseopagans (such as Crowleyites, Odonists and Voodooists) who engage in activities of which many Neopagans disapprove, without allying ourselves with and defending a bunch of jerks, fascists, and psychopaths who have publically and proudly announced their allegiance to the the supreme figure of evil in Western culture.

I don't care if it's possible to come up with rational-sounding arguments that the Devil isn't really such a bad fellow, or to claim that you're really worshipping the Norse deity Loki, or the Egyptian god Set, or various Lovecraftian critters, and that they were all victims of bad public relations. Such arguments don't change the subconscious images that most people (including the Satanists) have of these entities, nor the flavor of the psychic energy that they tap into. Nor does it matter that public representatives of Satanic organizations are frequently charming and

charismatic individuals - so was Adolph Hitler. And I don't care if some Satanists are really proto-Pagans - we can give them the information they need to mature without having to pretend that their juvenile sophistries deserve respect.

Lets review the facts about the origins, philosophy, and character of Satanism...

ORIGINS: Satan as a demigod was created to besmear the Palepagan horned gods and to fulfill the necessary role of the Evil God who fights their Good God. A deity of absolute evil makes no sense in a polytheistic system, only in a dualistic one. All the difference forms of Satanism now active in the West are branches of conservative Christianity. Satanism as an organization was created by Catholicism as an inverted version of itself, with a little help from leftover Gnostic heretics (see the books of Jeffrey Burton Russell for details). It was the Christians who defined the practices, symbols, and beliefs of Satanism in the first place, while the writings of modern Satanists have nearly given a "blackwash" to the fundimentally Christian concepts involved.

PHILOSOPHY: Satanists are obsessed with forcing everyone into simplistic Christian/Islamic dualism, just as other fundamentalists are. That's why they insist on lumping the "White Witches" and Neopagans in with their official enemies, the Christians, whenever they're not trying to recruit us as allies. LaVey's latest propaganda book (The Church of Satan, supposedly by "authorized biographer" Blanche Barton) actually goes so far as to denounce several well known Neopagans (including yours truly) by name in the same paragraph with fundamentalist Michael Warnke and competitor Michael Aquino (Who stole most of LaVey's membership). Most Satanic "philosophy" simply consists of turning Catholicism or other forms of conservative Christianity upside-down and inside-out (as if thats going to be an improvement), advocating hedonism, and adding some warmed-over quotes from Crowley, Nietzsche, or Hitler to the mix. Way deep inside, it's shallow.

CHARACTER: Most Satanists actively approve of behavior, magical and mundance, that Neopagans consider to be unethical and immoral. Some Satanists are just as evil - in every interpetation that the Neopagan Community would agree upon - as the members of the Inquisition, Hitler's stormtroopers,

Stalin's secret police, or Central American death squads. There is nothing in Satanic belief (left wing, right wing, or sociopathic) to separate the genuinely evil from the merely obnoxious; anything you can get away with is approved of by the God of Evil.

Neopaganism is less than thirty years old - fifty if we count the early Mesopagan Wiccans. Many of us have deliberately identified ourselves with the historical victims of Christian persecution - witches, magicians, heretics, and heathens - in part, as a way to extend our psychic history. So it's a tempting argument to say that we also have to identify with every other group that gets denounced by fundamentalists, such as gays, feminists, high school biology teachers, communists, murderers, rapists... whoops! Do we really want to defend genuinely evil people simply because the fundamentalists have attacked them? Should we offer support to individuals and organizations who advocate ideas and actions we consider evil, just because we have no legal proof that they have gotten around to acting on their proclaimed beliefs yet?

Over the years, I have met scores of people who called themselves Satanists. I even called myself one for eight months when I was 17 (see "My Satanic Adventure", Gnostica, 1975). I learned back then, and subsequent experience has reiterated the lesson, that most people who practice Satanism are fundamentalists in drag. Once in a while I would meet a genuinely nice, if confused, person in a Satanist group, but they usually wound up dropping out and joining some other path. The overwhelming majority of Satanists I have known were sleazy, manipulative, cruel, and unethical. I can't think of a single reason why we should make them feel welcome in our community, or why we should make their activities any easier, or why we should help their groups to grow and prosper. If the Satanists were ever to conquer the world (Goddess Forbid!), they would herd us into ovens just as quickly as the other fundamentalists would.

Now, I firmly believe that people are entitled to have whatever religious beliefs they wish, no matter how wrong or foolish I might consider those beliefs, because I want other folks to extend the same freedom to me. I don't believe however, that people have a right to enshrine their religious beliefs into civil law and force religious minorities to live accordingly to the

majority's theological opinions. Nor, do they have a right to use their beliefs as a cover for committing what criminologists refer to as "crimes with victims" - murder, rape, stealing and polluting, for example (as distinct from "victimless crimes" covered by most sex, drug and gambling laws). The basic "don't kill, rape, steal, pollute," etc., sort of moral code, necessary for the physical welfare of any group of humans (and the Earth) is not a specifically religious one but it is (or should be) a universally agreed-upon set of survival principles.

The distinction between crimes with and without victims is not always clear, since some people have very broad definitions of what constitutes victimization. Some Christians feel victimized when their children are taught evolution, some feminists when they see PLAYBOY on sale at their local convenience store, and some Neopagans when not given equal media time to counter evangelical lies about Paganism. In each of these cases, the persons feeling victimized object to a pluralistic society in which others, perceived as both evil and powerful, present ideas the "victims" find offensive. Feeling victimized, of course, is not the same thing as being a victim, although it's usually a component of the experience.

Defining freedom and rights in a pluralistic society is not always easy. Some fundamentalists believe that freedom of religion means that they should be able to establish a theocracy and prevent "sinful" behavior by others. Censorship advocates believe that freedom of expression does not include the right to disseminate ideas and images they consider evil. Many people believe that freedom to assemble is only for "good" people and causes, or that the right to keep and bear arms is only for state-approved soldiers and police soldiers.

Neopagans are duotheists and/or polytheists. Our religious beliefs usually approve of pluralism and toleration, and most of us don't seem to have too much trouble living surrounded by people of other faiths, as long as they aren't trying to interfere with our freedom of belief and practice.

After some long, emotional discussions with my spouse (who is a fervent Civil libertarian) I'm forced to reluctantly admit that exactly the same reasoning holds whether we're dealing with Satanists or other Fundamentalists. We don't have the right to exclude them from our public events nor to prevent

them from shopping in our stores, nor to keep them from talking to the media, much as we might like to. We must honor their constitutional rights to practice their religion. But we don't have to be helpful to them in the process.

If a Satanic group or individual is being discriminated against in such a way as to make legal action appropriate, they can always call in the American Civil Liberties Union, who will defend just about anybody with a good constitutional case. If they are having a public relations problem, they can bloody well hire an advertising agency to explain that black is white and evil is OK. Either way, there is no reason for us to spend our miniscule funds on defending them.

SO. How exactly can we make it clear to Satanists that they are not wanted in our community? As Deb puts it, "How do we express our disapproval and give it clout, without violating their rights?" Her solution : "We do it just as our Pagan Ancestors did - by shunning. We don't have to be respectful or friendly to Satanists. Shunning is ethical and legal, and no one has a civil right to be liked."

What does shunning as a tactic mean? Here's one example : Neopagans who own occult shops should not sell copies of 'The Satanic Bible' or other Satanist literature, provide tools that can normally only be used for magical malpractice (granted, a tricky judgement sometimes), nor allow local Satanists to use our stores to teach classes or to recruit new members. Of course, we can't keep Satanists completely out of our shops. We have to allow them to come in and buy other books and products, just as we would allow Christians, Jews, or Buddhists to do so, because to discriminate against them economically would violate their constitutional rights (besides, some of those proto-Pagans might be among them). But we don't have to make the practice of Satanism easier for them.

Unfortunately, we can't simply exclude Satanists from attending public Pagan festivals, for reasons both constitutional and practical (as Deb puts it, "What are you going to do, have attendees all sign oaths that they aren't Satanists?" - and Satanists would hardly be bothered about lying, now would they?). But we do not have to go out of our way to make Satanists feel comfortable or respected, and we do not have to give them space on our program schedules. If a group of Satanists want to set up a recruiting table at a Neopagan Festival, an anti-Satanist table should be set up right next to it, with large signs indicating that the festival organizers do not approve of Satanism. Knowledgeable people should talk to anyone who seems to be taken in

by the Satanists. The same procedures would hold for other Christians showing up at public festivals. (As I understand it, the only way that you can legally prevent attendance at an event on the grounds of religion is when that event is a private, invitation-only party. Those of you with a background in civil rights legislation may be able to determine if there really is any way to exclude fundamentalists from Pagan festivals).

Those of us who interact with the mainstream media can and should refuse to ever defend Satanism. We can and should publically take the stand that Satanism is stupid, unimaginative, ugly and destructive - and that just like fundamentalism of which it is an integral part, Satanism is the enemy of the Goddesses and Gods we worship.

We sure as Hades shouldn't join in public relations or civil liberties coalitions with Satanists any more than we would with the Inquisition or the Ku Klux Klan (join the ACLU if you like, I did). Such coalitions can serve only to benefit the Satanists who will cheerfully hide behind the (very slightly) superior public image that years of hard work have won us, and the fundamentalist Christians who will point to such coalitions as further "proof" that Neopagans and Satanists are identical. We have absolutely nothing to gain from letting the Satanists ride on our coattails, and everything to lose.

At least some of the enemies of our enemies are our enemies - not our friends. It's about time that the Neopagan community closed our ranks against them. ADF already has provisions in the By-Laws to enable us to legally exclude "individuals practicing creeds inimical to Neopagan Druidism" such as "varities of conservative monotheism, atheism, demonism, racialism, or other such faiths", from our activities and our membership. As pluralists, we're perfectly willing to let our members, guests, and even our clergy, belong to a wide variety of other religions. But in ADF, as I think it should be throughout the Neopagan community, fundamentalists, whether they are wearing crosses or goat heads, are simply not welcome, and never will be.